

**WCAA PANEL ABSTRACTS FOR  
THE TAIWAN SOCIETY FOR ANTHROPOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY AND  
WORLD COUNCIL OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS  
CONFERENCE IN TAIPEI  
(October 3-4, 2014)**

**(1) Environmental Anthropology: Rethinking Environmental Constraint and Construction in the Human Condition**

(Greg Acciaioli – [gregory.acciaioli@uwa.edu.au](mailto:gregory.acciaioli@uwa.edu.au) )

Controversies surrounding such issues as the anthropogenic contribution to global climate change have galvanized reconceptualizations of the relationship of humanity and the environment. For example, the conceptualization of the Anthropocene has accorded humanity a degree of agency and hence responsibility for environmental welfare that many political actors wish to deny. Anthropologists, in particular, have responded by delineating new frameworks, ranging from second-generation political ecology to actor-network theory, that assert that all human institutions and conduct must be contextualized in terms of their environmental nexus. Organised in order to further one of the three WCAA research themes, 'Environmental challenges and local knowledge', this panel invites contributions of both theoretical and ethnographic orientation that seek to construct new ways of relating humanity to the environment and to test paradigms that have already been constructed. We are particularly keen to have papers that contextualise such conceptualisations with regard to national or regional traditions in anthropology and/or to prominent themes in the World Anthropologies movement. Papers that ethnographically delineate how particular configurations and deployments of local knowledge contribute to these recastings of the human conditions as humanity both making and made by its environment are very welcome, as are those that focus on how such efforts have related to socio-political constellations of power, whether the state, corporations, transnational organisations and others, that have both facilitated and hindered such projects.

**(2) The State of/and Anthropology in Asia**

(Gordon Mathews – [b664788@mailserv.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:b664788@mailserv.cuhk.edu.hk) )

There is a double face of anthropology in Asia. There is the question of how anthropology within a society is evolving in an increasingly globalized era, and what role anthropology plays in society and in the world at large: this is the state \_of \_anthropology, There is also the question of what role government plays in the shaping of

anthropology, from a very strong role, as in China and other societies, to a somewhat weaker role, as in Japan and India and other societies: this is the state \_in\_ anthropology. The state \_of\_ anthropology and the state \_in\_ anthropology are of course linked closely. In an Asian context, what are the advantages and disadvantages of a state attitude of guidance as opposed to an attitude of unconcern or neglect of anthropology? And how does this relate to the future of anthropology in different Asian societies, and to their relation to world anthropology? The papers in this panel, from a number of diverse Asian societies, will explore these questions from within their own national anthropological traditions and perspectives.

### **(3) Relating Regional Anthropologies to World Anthropologies**

(Vesna Vučinić Nešković – [vvucinic4@gmail.com](mailto:vvucinic4@gmail.com) )

This panel aims to discuss how regional anthropologies may contribute to the world anthropologies ideas and WCAA activities. We would like to exchange experiences on how collaborations (formal and informal) between institutions, networks and individuals within certain mega regions and continents have facilitated new spaces for world anthropologies (e.g. Latin America, North Africa, South Asia, Northern Europe, etc). We also want to learn how anthropologists tied by geographic proximity and/or linguistic closeness have formed new platforms for anthropological education, research, conferences and publishing. We thus invite WCAA delegates from different parts of the globe to participate in this exchange of experiences and ideas for the future.

### **(4) Making Sense of Contemporary Capitalism: Off Centre Perspectives**

(Chandana Mathur – [chandanamathur@gmail.com](mailto:chandanamathur@gmail.com) )

Most analytical writings on contemporary capitalist crisis and transformation have tended to emerge from within long-established dominant centres of global capitalism. Does the variation of place and perspective throw fresh light on 'the inconstant geography of capitalism' (to use a phrase from Storper and Walker) and on politics, war and ecology in the present conjuncture? What does an off-centre anthropology of contemporary capitalism look like?

## **(5) WCAA Anniversary Panel: World Anthropologies and the World of Anthropology**

(Michal Buchowski – [mbuch@amu.edu.pl](mailto:mbuch@amu.edu.pl))

The struggle to create a solid foundation for the flourishing of world anthropologies has been an important goal of the WCAA. To date this goal has been accomplished by bringing delegates from our member associations together to discuss our diverse intellectual and historical trajectories and to provide avenues for nourishing and protecting this diversity. WCAA is committed to a conceptualization of "anthropology" as one of "anthropologies" that does not privilege one theoretical or methodology tradition over another. At the same time, the world of anthropology is growing more singular and ethnocentric through the use of English as the main language of communication, and even more importantly, English language journals, especially those of the U.S. and Europe, have become more highly ranked than other language journals. Systems of rankings, consolidation of the theoretical frameworks, and other academic and economic power dynamics are working against the goal of maintaining anthropological diversity. This panel will examine the changing world of anthropology and anthropologies with a view to future of the discipline and its associations.